

## Greed<sup>18</sup>

Paul wants Christians to fight for thanksgiving in their struggle for purity because a greedy heart is at the root of sexual immorality and impurity. The only time people are immoral and impure is when they are greedy for things that are immoral and impure. Take away the greedy heart that desires immorality, and those evil actions will also go away. Paul sees something unique about gratitude that has the power to destroy the greedy lust gripping the heart. We can better understand the connection between greed and gratitude when we grasp their opposite natures.

Greedy lust wants what it does not have. Of course, it's not necessarily wrong to want things you don't have. If you're hungry, it's good to want a sandwich. If you're thirsty, it's right to desire some water. When you're tired, there's nothing wrong with longing for a good night's sleep. Greedy lust, however, perverts desire either in *degree* or in *direction*. Greed perverts desire in degree when you

want a good thing too much. If you're hungry and want a sandwich so badly that you're short-tempered with the server at the deli, or if you're thirsty and want a drink so badly that you don't share with others who are thirsty, then your good desire is perverted in degree. Greed perverts desire in direction when you want things you shouldn't want or you want to satisfy your desire in the wrong way. Sexual desire is not sinful in itself, but when you desire sex with a woman who is not your spouse, your desire is pointed in the wrong direction and is lustful.

In contrast, gratitude is the attitude of a heart that is thankful for anything and everything the Lord gives. You are grateful when you are glad for and content with what you have. Thankfulness is the opposite of lust because the thankful heart has stopped prowling around for everything it doesn't have and is overwhelmed with appreciation for all the good things it already possesses. The logic of lust requires you to be discontent with what you have and pay attention to all the

things you don't have. The logic of thankfulness requires you to focus on what you have already received and to be overcome with thanks. Gratitude is the opposite of greed.

This is more than a true principle or an interesting contrast; it is also a strategy for defeating sin. God doesn't only make known to us the truth that greed and gratitude are opposites. He commands us to *stop being greedy* and *start being grateful*. In a war it's not enough to defend against the attack of an aggressor. Ultimately, we must take offensive measures to be victorious. Gratitude is the offensive weapon that destroys the enemy stronghold of greed that is at the source of your desire for pornography. When you begin to destroy greed with gratitude, you're not far from freedom.